

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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R 280935Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3606

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0655

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT AO

SUBJECT: HIGH COMMISSIONER IN TROUBLE BUT NOT OUT

1. MPLA'S POLITICAL BUREAU IN LUANDA PUBLISHED A COMMUNIQUE MAY 23 ACCUSING GENERAL SILVA CARDOSO, THE PORTUGUESE HIGH COMMISSIONER IN ANGOLA, OF PARTIALITY TO OTHER LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, INEFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND HOSTILITY TO MPLA. MPLA SAID IT HAD LOST CONFIDENCE IN THE HIGH COMMISSIONER BUT STOPPED JUST SHORT OF CALLING FOR HIS DISMISSAL.

2. MPLA'S LABOR GROUPING, UNTA (NATIONAL UNION OF ANGOLAN WORKERS), WAS NOT SO TIMID. ONE OF ITS 18 DEMANDS PRESENTED TO THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT ON MAY 22 (SEPTTEL) CALLED FOR THE DISMISSAL OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER BECAUSE OF HIS RECENT STATEMENTS TO "EXPRESSO" IN LISBON BLAMING MPLA FOR LUANDA'S VIOLENCE.

3. THE COUNCIL OF THE REVOLUTION, THE EXECUTIVE ARM OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT IN PORTUGAL, RELEASED A COMMUNIQUE THAT WAS PUBLISHED HERE ON MAY 23 WHICH ANALYZED THE SITUATION IN ANGOLA
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AND REITERATED THE AFM'S SUPPORT FOR THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES

IN ANGOLA. THE LENGTHY STATEMENT NEVER MENTIONED THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND ONLY OBLIQUELY LAUDED THE STEPS TAKEN BY THE ANGOLAN DEFENSE COUNCIL (HEADED BY CARDOSO) TO RESTORE ORDER. GIVEN THE RECENT MPLA ATTACKS ON THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, THIS LAPSE MUST BE SEEN AS A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HIM ON THE PART OF THE COUNCIL. (IT ALSO SAYS THE OBVIOUS ABOUT WHICH IS THE COUNCIL'S FAVORITE ANGOLAN LIBERATION GROUP.)

4. GEN CARDOSO'S ONLY SUPPORT NOW COMES FROM FNLA AND UNITA. (FNLA ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE ON MAY 23 PRAISING HIM FOR HIS NEUTRALITY.) BOTH MOVEMENTS HAVE RECENTLY TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT THEY CONTINUE TO BACK THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND WILL NOT PERMIT HIM TO BE REMOVED.

5. COMMENT: CARDOSO HAS DONE AN ACCEPTABLE JOB OF BEING IMPARTIAL AND HE HAS HAD SOME RECENT SUCCESS IN IMPROVING THE SECURITY SITUATION IN LUANDA. HOWEVER HIS ACCURATE PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF MPLA AND NETO FOR ARMING THE MASSES, WHILE LONG OVERDUE, WAS A POLITICAL BLUNDER AND HAS GIVEN MPLA A PLAUSIBLE EXCUSE TO CALL FOR HIS HEAD. REMOVING CARDOSO, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BE EASY. FNLA AND UNITA WILL RESIST STRONGLY ANY ATTEMPT TO REPLACE HIM. (HOWEVER, JUST HOW STRONGLY THEY CAN AND WOULD RESIST IS UNCLEAR.) MOREOVER IT WOULD BE NEAR TO IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND A SINGLE CANDIDATE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THREE GROUPS. IN THIS SITUATION THE ACCEPTANCE OF A REPLACEMENT BY MPLA IMPLIES AN ALMOST CERTAIN REJECTION BY FNLA AND CONVERSELY.
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